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# Modeſt Survey

Of the moſt conſiderable things

IN A

# DISCOURSE

Lately Publiſhed, Entitled

# NAKED TRUTH.

Written in a Letter to a Friend.

Imprimatur,

*May* 26. 1676. *G. Jane.*

*LONDON*,
Printed for *Moſes Pitt* at the Sign of the Angel in St. *Paul's* Church-yard. 1676.

*SIR,*

YOu have made uſe of your Authority over me in a particular, that nothing under that abſolute power you have with me, could have prevailed: To give you an account of my ſence of that Diſcourſe that has of late made ſo much noiſe, Entitled *Naked Truth*, chiefly in what he ſays, concerning *Biſhops and Prieſts*. If I were only to diſcharge my thoughts into the Boſom of ſo Generous and Worthy a Friend, I could eaſily have reſolved on it: But you inſinuated a Deſign of making a more publick uſe of what I might write about it, And this raiſed a mutiny in my thoughts, which could not be ſoon ſubdued into a compliance with ſo uneaſie a task. Others have already animadverted upon that Diſcourſe with great advantages of Wit and Learning; But I not being born under ſuch happy Stars, do expoſe my ſelf much, in hazarding to write, both after ſuch Pens, and about a Book that has had the *luck* to be much read, and by ſome no leſs commended. It may therefore ſeem great preſumption in me to interpoſe in ſuch a matter: I know what I ſay will be received with all poſſible diſadvantages, that may ariſe, either from the great Partiality many have for that Diſcourſe, or from the juſt diſdain others may conceive, that a perſon unknown and undeſired ſhould engage in it.

Yet after all this, I am ſo entirely at your Diſpoſal, that I ſhall reſiſt no longer, but deliver my ſence very plainly, in that blunt freedom that muſt be allowed my breeding, and way of converſe, upon ſome of the moſt material things in that Paper. I cannot but acknowledge the *Writer* ſeems a Perſon that is in good earneſt, and does ſincerely deſire the peace of our Church; that ſo we being at one among our ſelves, may both carry on the common deſigns of true Piety, and reſiſt the In-roads Popery is making on us. He writes gravely, and like a man that has deep impreſſions of Religion upon him: and ſo I am heartily ſorry ſo good a Man, as I verily believe he is, ſhould have been prevailed on, to have done ſo unadviſed a thing, as was firſt the writing, and then the publiſhing ſuch a Diſcourſe. We do already groan under too many diviſions, and we need no new attempts to en-

creaſe them: or make parties among our ſelves. And therefore the Rule of our Saviour ought to have been followed, if he had thought his Fathers and Brethren had treſpaſſed againſt the Laws of Charity, Order, or Edification: He ſhould firſt have propoſed it to his Ordinary, and the Right Reverend Biſhops, and have hoped that either they ſhould have ſatisfied him, or he them. But to begin at publiſhing ſuch Papers, cannot be reconciled with the Rule of the Goſpel: for if he owed that precaution in dealing with his Brother, it was much more due to his Mother the Church, and the Spiritual Fathers of it, and he ſhould not have attempted as *Cham* did, to expoſe any ſuppoſed nakedneſs of his Ghoſtly Parents.

There was another thing he ought to have conſidered, that Chriſt has ſaid, *Wo unto him by whom offences come.* By offences or ſcandals are meant ſuch ſtumbling blocks, ſnares, and gall-traps, as may occaſion our Brother's fall. I wiſh he had conſidered this well, and then I ſuppoſe, he would have ſeen that his labours in that Diſcourſe were like both to encourage thoſe that do unreaſonably ſeparate from us: and make ſome of theſe who adhere to our Communion ſtumble, and ſhake, when they ſee ſuch things ſaid by one, who ſeems to be of our Church, and yet ſtudies very induſtriouſly to blame us in every thing.

If he had minded theſe things more, and the heats of his Breaſt, and Head leſs; he had not gone ſo far, nor truſted himſelf ſo much in a matter of ſuch high concern. For I am confident, had he ſhewed his Papers, during all that time they lay by him, to any Man of Learning or Judgement, they had ſo clearly convinced him of a great many miſtakes, that this Iſſue had turned Abortive, and died before the Birth.

After all the horrid abuſe has been made of the ſuppoſed returns of Prayer, which has turned away the minds of many from thoſe ſacred exerciſes, either in private, or publick; looking on all ſecret wreſtling with God, as the heat of fancy, and all publick worſhip, as the compliance with that form or party we cleave to; it appeared ſtrange to me, to find a Man that ſeems inflamed with a zeal for devotion, own his publiſhing this upon returns of Prayer: which to ſome will be thought to patronize *Enthuſiaſm*, and by others will be made a ſcoff to jear at all Piety and Devotion. God anſwers our Prayers, when he beſtows on us thoſe Graces, and Bleſſings, we ask of him: but if any body that is fond of ſome compoſure of his, which he has a great mind to publiſh, prays for direction what to do; and if he take meaſures from the temper or heats, he feels after ſuch Prayers, he expoſeth himſelf to the greateſt dangers imaginable. For, he ought

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to examine what he is about, not by his own liking, or diſliking it, but by the Rules of the Goſpel, of doing all things to Peace, Edification, and Order: by the rules of Humility, and Modeſty, not over-valuing himſelf, nor putting himſelf forth, but as he is called and directed by a good warrant and authority: and by the Rules of the Church and State where he lives. And if any man on a pretence of following the anſwers of Prayer, will ſuperſede any of theſe Rules, he ſets up one of the worſt principles that can be imagined, which muſt needs ſubvert all Religion and Government. I do not deny but in matters purely indifferent, and that relate only to my ſelf, when I cannot ſee wherein God has bounded my liberty; many directors of Conſciences, think it is a ſafe rule to pray to God for direction, and after that to follow what makes the ſtrongeſt impreſſion upon my mind, but this muſt only take place where the thing in all it's circumſtances is abſolutely indifferent, and in my choice, for if I carry it farther I cannot ſtop till I have run into all the precipices of the worſt kind of Enthuſiaſm.

Now ſure the Authour of that Diſcourſe could not be ſuch an ill Diſcerner, as not to ſee that he was not left to his free choice in this matter: and therefore there is too much ground to ſuſpect that he made his Prayers, having this Idol of his beloved Book in his heart: and praying in ſuch a manner, if God left him to his Idols, to be deceived, and miſled by them, it is nothing but what the Prophet threatned to all that ſhould ſo pray to God. From which I hope I may ſafely conclude, that if this Authour had examined what he was about, rather by theſe ſure and conſtant Rules before hinted, than by the unſtable and fallacious illuſions of an inflamed brain, he had weighed things in juſter ballances. *Ezek.* 14. *ver.* 7, 8, 9.

But I ſhall now enter into the Re-tail of the particulars he ſuggeſts, having thus viewed it in groſs. And to begin with what he ſays about *Articles of Faith*, there are two things I wiſh he had conſidered when he wrote it. The firſt is, thanks be to God, there is no need of any canvaſſing about theſe in our preſent caſe: for the greateſt parties of the *Non-conformiſts* have not departed from us, for any Articles of Faith: there being none of the Articles of our Church, that relate to Faith ſo much as conteſted by them. This being on the contrary, the great thing they boaſt: that they do in all things agree to the Doctrine and belief of our Church. So that I cannot imagine why fifteen pages were written on this Subject, when the Writer deſigned *Union*. For the Church of *England* is ſo far from being

taxed by them for impoſing and dogmatizing, that they rather judge our Articles too ſlack and large: and therefore when they went to compile a *Confeſſion of Faith*, how poſitively they determined in many points, in which the Articles of our Church leave us to the freedom of our thoughts, is apparent to all. It cannot be denied but the Articles of our Church were compiled with the higheſt diſcretion, and moderation that ever was uſed by un-inſpired men. Where Queſtions were ſo ſubtile, and intricate, that there were great grounds of doubting on both hands, as about *Predeſtination and the Efficacy of Grace*, they laid down the Doctrine of the Church in ſuch general expreſſions, as left a freedom to every one to chooſe in ſo difficult a point; where the Queſtions were Metaphyſical, as about the manner of our juſtification, they did not impoſe any ſubtilty on the Conſciences of the Clergy; who only are obliged to ſubſcribe them.

And this temper is the more to be wondred at, ſince we know by their other writings, and the accounts of that time, that the chief compilers of theſe Articles, were in their private opinions poſitive, and determined about thoſe things; Yet they thought it very unreaſonable to eſtabliſh controverted Points as Articles of Faith, and to make their private judgements the ſtandards of Church-communion. So that as it is a moſt unreaſonable charge on the Church of *England*, to ſay ſhe has tyrannically impoſed many unneceſſary conditions on her members in Points of Faith and Doctrine; it is alſo a very ſtrange complaint from one that expreſſes a great zeal for re-uniting the Diſſenters to the Body: for any relaxation that way would be ſo far from bringing them nearer, that it would rather drive them farther from us, upon new and more juſtifiable prejudices. What occaſion would be given them to inſult, and ſay we had changed the boundaries and land-marks our Predeceſſors had left us: and were making a new hotch potch of a Church, to take in all Hereſies? how would the Church of *Rome* triumph, and ſay that our Faith was indeed temporary, and changed with the faſhion? And let the Wit of Man deviſe ſuch an Engine for propagating Popery, as to diſclaim the Doctrines and practices of the Primitive Church. This were indeed to fortifie the prejudices of *Novelty* and *Schiſm*, with which the Emiſſaries of that Church, ſtudy to aſperſe us to the higheſt degree poſſible. For I ſpeak it knowingly, we ſhould by ſo doing ſhake, if not wholly ſcandalize and drive from us, the greateſt part of our moſt devout Communicants: who are all apt to ſay of thoſe firſt ages, *Let my ſoul be with theirs.*

And this carries me farther on this head, into a juſt wonder and aſtoniſhment, to ſee one that is but *of yeſterday*, (I ſhall not add the other

other part of that Character) assume such a confidence to judge those great Worthies, who came out of the fire of the Persecution, with so many Trophies of an honourable Victory about them; having lost their eyes, and other members in the conflict: who sate in the *Council of Nice* to determine in a Point of no less concern, than the Glory of the Son of God, by whose Cross and Spirit they had triumphed over all the Powers both of Earth and Hell. I remember when I lived in *Holland* and conversed with the Disciples of *Episcopius* and *Curcellæus*, we often discoursed on this very point: they usually said, *Why should we not accept of Scripture expressions without imposing new ones for Tests?* And often did they entertain me with Discourses of the *simplicity of the first Christians, and the most ancient Creeds.* To whom I always answered, as long as the Christians did retain that simplicity of believing, it had been very ill done, to have introduced new expressions or subtilties into our Faith or Creeds: but when it is apparent that men have invented corrupt glosses for Scripture expressions, and use the Scripture phrases only with a reserve of these meanings: it was necessary to find out such Tests as might discover their double dealing. For to accept of general expressions, from one that I have good reason to believe uses them in an Heretical sence, is plainly to accept money that I know is of a false alloy because it hath the right stamp.

Nor can it be said, the difference was small and about a speculative point, for the difference was both about a matter of great weight, and about a practical point. I suppose no body can be so shallow as to think it was about a Letter, the one being for the ὁμοούσιος the other for the ὁμοιούσιος, for then the ἀνόμοιοι differed but in another Letter, that made Christ totally unlike the Father. The controversie was, *Whether the Word that dwelt in the Flesh of our blessed Saviour, was a Being truly distinct from the substance of the Father, and created by the Father*; or as others did moderate it, *made by the Father? so that there was a time, wherein he was not? or if he was the increated Word, that was from all eternity with the Father.* In short whether *He was God or a Creature?* And when the *Arians* pretended that they believed *the Word was God*, the Fathers thus argued with them: either He is God by His Nature and *Substance*, or not; if He was not God by His Nature, then it was but a cheat, and a false Title, they gave Him: but God's honour was not so to be given to another. If he was God by His Nature and *Substance*, then He must either be of the same *substance* with the Father, or of a different *substance*: if of the same *substance*, they gained what they desired: if He was of another *substance*, then there were more Gods than one; if there were two differ-

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rent *ſubſtances*, that were both truly Gods in *ſubſtance* which was groſs Polytheiſm. I muſt acknowledge I ſhall very much ſuſpect any man's reaſoning faculties are not ſound, that ſees not a neceſſary ſeries of truths hanging cloſely together in this contexture. So that it is plain the *Arians* and our Modern *Platinians* (who are indeed more ingenuous than the *Arians* were) did not think *the Word that was made Fleſh, was truly God.* And now let any Man judge if there can be a greater and weightier matter, than whether Jeſus Chriſt were God by Nature, or only a Creature. Nor can a miſtake riſe higher than to believe Him to be a *meer Man* who is *the Eternal Son of God*, or Him to be *the Eternal Son of God*, who was only a *meer Man*.

This controverſie was not only ſpeculative but practical, for our apprehenſions and belief muſt direct our acts of worſhip, and adoration: if Chriſt be only a Man, we cannot have that veneration for Him, that confidence in Him, or love to Him, which we offer to the great God. For there can be no Idolatry in the World ſo great, as the worſhipping a meer Man, with the ſame adoration both inward and outward, that we offer up to the Father. This is, ſure if any thing can be, the giving God's Glory to another. On the other hand if He be the great God and of the ſame ſubſtance with the Father, it is the moſt irreverent, irreligious and ungrateful thing in the whole World, not to offer that adoration which is due to Him, equally with the Father: He having ſo ſignally commended and expreſſed his love to us. So that this is a matter not only of ſpeculation, but of practice.

This may ſuffice to ſatisfie any body, how juſt, reaſonable, and neceſſary it was for the *Council of Nice* to make their Definition in this matter, that ſo a Teſt might be found out, for diſcriminating the Catholicks from the Hereticks. I am as far from a deſire of multiplying new Creeds and Subſcriptions as any man alive, but if there be not ſome in the Church, how ſoon may a conſpiracy be laid and formed within the boſom of it, that lying ſecret under general expreſſions, till it be ripe and ſtrong, at length as out of a *Trojan-horſe* ſhall burſt forth to ruine and ſubvert Religion. It is indeed a high tyranny of the Church of *Rome*, that has added *Anathemaes* to her Canons about leſſer and diſputable points; but except there be Foundations laid, on which all the builders of the Church muſt edifie, we ſhall ſoon grow worſe than a *Babel*, for we ſhall build with divided Languages and Tongues.

For what he ſays about ceremonies and all other controverted heads among us, I ſhall only offer you one or two conſiderations. The firſt

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is, that in all ſuch Rents as are now in our Church, it is a very unreaſonable demand to deſire any thing that is eſtabliſhed ſhould be changed without a very great cauſe: for to love changes for changes ſake, is an argument of a light unſettled mind. And mutations in things external, work much on the vulgar: who ſeldom looking beyond what they ſee, and hear, are apt to be much ſtartled at any viſible alteration. This made our bleſſed Saviour in his new Diſpenſation alter outward things as little as was poſſible. Therefore he ſanctified two Rites that were familiar to the Jews, to be the two great Sacraments of his Goſpel, that ſo the Jews might be as little ſtartled as might be. But if there did appear great and juſt cauſes to change things that are indifferent, there is no doubt but the Fathers of our Church and our Legiſlators, *the King and His two Houſes of Parliament* would examine them very deliberately. If then the Authour of that Paper offers any reaſons for a change, he muſt take care they be very good and material ones: I hope he will not inſiſt on the ſo often baffled objections againſt them. There is but one new reaſon can be offered, and that is an agreement of a conſiderable body of our Diſſenters, to deſire ſuch conceſſions, upon which, they being granted, they would enter into the Communion of the Church; when this is once done then ſuch a ſtep were made, as muſt needs ſet all men to very deep and ſerious conſiderations, to ballance the evils of Schiſm, the danger of Popery, the relaxing all order, and the abounding of all impiety among us, which thoſe who have made the Schiſm are deeply guilty of.

It is the duty of all men to lay theſe things home to the Conſciences of ſuch as ſeparate from us: that they may not ſtiffly keep up a breach, thorough which ſo much miſchief flows in upon us, but may in colder blood review what is paſt: and come to make ſuch offers, as may encourage thoſe who love peace and moderation, to drive on ſo deſired a work. But to expoſe the dignity of a Church, and of conſtitutions ſettled by ſo long a preſcription, to the ſcorn of every bold Diſſenter, can have no other effect, but to encourage them in their Schiſm, and heap contempt upon our ſelves, when we proſtitute Law and Authority to ſuch affronts. Then do thoſe that divide, boaſt, as if we diſtruſted our Cauſe, or were afraid either of the ſtrength of their Reaſons, or of their Party: and they ſtand their ground the more firmly, becauſe they ſee us quitting ours; and are confident, that if they can weather out a few more blaſts, we will leave the field entirely to them. This makes their pride ſwell, and their demands become endleſs and unſatisfiable. But if their Stomachs were ſo far down, that they had the Humility and honeſty to confeſs they had

been miſtaken in ſome things, and were now reſolved to go as far towards the repairing our breaches, as their Conſciences could allow, and did propoſe a clear Scheme of what they would ſubmit to, and on what terms they would again enter into the Communion of the Church, then I am confident ſuch candid dealing will find an entertainment beyond what they can juſtly hope for. And that upon very good reaſons: for we ought to make another account of the modeſt ſcruples of ſuch as are indeed tender Conſciences, than of the preſumptuous demands of inſolent Sectaries. And it is moſt juſt that propoſitions this way ought to begin from them: they are Subjects, and the Laws are ſettled: and they gave very juſt cauſe both to Church and State to be diſpleaſed with them and to diſtruſt them, and ſo they ought to addreſs for favour upon ſuch reaſonable terms, that the inſolence of their demands may give no new grounds of irritation and offence.

And till then all that is incumbent on us of the Church, is; firſt to live and labour ſo, as to outdo all theſe appearances of good among them; which have wrought ſo much on the vulgar; then to pray the God of Peace, that he would of his infinite Mercy and compaſſion to theſe divided Churches, pour down a Spirit of Love and Peace on all men: and in fine, to do all that lies in us to convince thoſe that ſeparate of the evil of their courſes, in making ſuch breaches in Chriſt's Vineyard and Sheepfold, that lets in the Foxes and Wolves: and to be diſpoſing our own minds into ſuch a gentle temper, that notwithſtanding all paſt provocations, and all the advantages we have from the Laws and Law-givers, yet we may be willing to yield even to the peeviſh weakneſs and unaccountable ſcruples of theſe that ſeparate from us: as far as can be without giving juſt occaſions of ſcandal on the other hand. But to give them ſuch advantages as this Diſcourſe does, is, that which I cannot reconcile to the common Rules of Prudence and Edification.

I wiſh this Writer had alſo conſidered, how unjuſt a way of reaſoning it was, to argue from the indecencies and abuſes any may be guilty of in the uſe of ſome of the Ceremonies, that they ought to be taken away. Alas! at that rate, the moſt ſacred and ſolemn things ſhall not eſcape: ſince all things when they fall into the hands of mortal men, are ſubject to ſuch abuſes. He did alſo very much forget himſelf, when he reckoned, the *Bowing to the Altar* one of the Ceremonies of the Church, which has never enjoyned it, neither by Canon nor Rubrick: for in it all are left to their freedom. So that this can furniſh none with ſo much as a pretence to excuſe their ſeparation.

For his long Diſcourſe about Church-men and their Qualifications and

and labours chiefly about Preaching, it certainly deserves great consideration, and in it we cannot steer by a better Rule, than those most excellent constitutions Antiquity has left us: which are indeed so divine and pure, that if this Age could bear such a Reformation, I know no greater blessing could befal us. But it is more to be wished than hoped for, to see *Plato's Commonwealth* built upon the *ruines and dregs of Romulus*. We ought to converse much with the writings the Ancients have left us concerning the Qualifications and Employments of the Clergy, such as *Nazianzen's Apologetick*, *Chrysostome's Books of the Priesthood*, and *Gregory the Great's Books of the Pastoral care*. But whatever defects we may charge our selves with, this is so far from contributing to our Schism, that it is rather the effect and consequence of it; for where there is *bitter zeal and strife, there is confusion and every evil work*: and so it was not needful to put this in a Book concerning Union. Nor have these that divide from us any reason of insulting over us, whatever we may have to humble our selves for those things, and least of all for Preaching: which perhaps is at this day come to such perfection, that if all our other defects were as much mended as these of Preaching are, we might on all accounts be esteemed the best and most excellent Church that ever was since the Ages of Miracles.

In a word to end all that needs be said on these Heads, the grounds of our communicating with any Church being chiefly the purity of their Doctrine and Worship, and that their order and Rules are such that they hinder the exercise of no Christian virtue, but very much advance it: no personal failings or defects how publick and gross soever, ought to make any to separate from such a Society. For till I be involved in some guilt, (which no other Man's faults can do) by joyning in Communion with a Church; I ought still to abide in it.

This must either be laid down for a Principle, otherwise Schisms and Rents shall be endless, for as long as men are men, personal failings and corruptions are unavoidable. And now having thus far examined the most considerable parts of that discourse, except what relates to *Bishops and Priests*, about which you desire chiefly to be satisfied; and upon which the Authour has laid out his utmost strength: I come at last to consider that: which I shall do with that candour and calmness I have carried along with me hitherto.

His opinion is. *That the Bishops Precedency over the rest of the Clergy with Authority to ordain, to exhort, to rebuke, to judge, and censure as he found cause, is of Apostolical institution, and hath been continued in the whole Church of God ever since, so that nothing but necessity, if that, can excuse those that set up another Form of Government: therefore*

*this Government ought to be ſtill kept in the Church.* But after all this he thinks the Biſhops and Prieſts are *one and the ſame order; ſo that by their Ordination they have no more power conferred on them, than Presbyters have,* This he ſtudies to prove: 1. *From the ſilence of the Scriptures that do not mention two ſuch orders.* 2. *Becauſe he finds but one Ordination, which he thinks cannot confer two Characters.* 3. *Becauſe the Apoſtles call themſelves Presbyters, and no where Biſhops.* 4. *Becauſe St.* Clement *in his Epiſtle ſpeaks only of Biſhops and Deacons.* 5. Juſtin Martyr *calls the Biſhop only Preſident.* 6. *St.* Cyprian *calls himſelf* Præpoſitus. 7. *Becauſe the Form of ordaining Elders, is the ſame with which Chriſt ordained the Apoſtles,* Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt, whoſe Sins ye forgive, they are forgiven them. 8. *The bad conſequences of admitting this difference of Order are great, for it will condemn all the other Reformed Churches.* Upon theſe reaſons he rejects *the Difference of Order,* and inſtead of that ſays, *the Apoſtles ordain'd all equally to be Biſhops or Presbyters, but ſome having more eminent gifts than others, the Apoſtles did by Commiſſion empower and conſtitute Theſe to be Overſeers and Biſhops over the reſt, from which beginning this practice has been kept up in the Church ever ſince.* Therefore he thinks *Prieſts ought not to ordain other Prieſts, but yet having done it, it is valid, and may without a crime be done by a Prieſt that were by ſhipwrack or any ſuch chance caſt into a Country where no Perſon can be had that is thus commiſſionated to ordain.*

This is a full and clear account of his opinion, and of the reaſons that led him to it. I ſhall now examine both, and Firſt, let us ſee what all this will amount to. This muſt ſignifie little or nothing to the compoſing differences among us: but will rather inflame them. For a Presbyterian may upon this ſuppoſition, very reaſonably plead, that ſince by his order he has the ſame Authority that a Biſhop hath, he ought not to be obliged or limited in the exerciſe of it. That any ſuch Commiſſion the Apoſtles gave ſome extraordinary men, muſt have been but temporary, for their lives; for if they had judged this a thing needful to be kept up in the Church; they had given ſuch laſting directions about it, conſtituting it a diſtinct order, as might have preſerved it ſtill in the Church; but ſince they did not that, we have no reaſon to acknowledge any ſuch Power now. And therefore if Prieſts ſee their Biſhop doing what they think amiſs, they may aſſume that Power their Order has given them, and judge and depoſe him too if need be. I am confident that *Authour* will not allow of this, and yet it is viſible that it ariſes naturally out of what he has ſet down.

But ſuppoſe he could avoid that, what does all he has ſaid contribute

bute to the re-uniting our Diſſenters, and us again: ſomewhat he may ſay, as to the *forreign Churches*, and yet I hope to ſhew that may be done another way. A little may be alſo ſaid, to ſuch as were ordained before, by Prieſts in the time of the late Uſurpation; who are now but a ſmall number: and yet even theſe, by his Principles did a very ill thing, who out of no neceſſity, but in a wanton ſedition againſt their Biſhops, threw them off by the ſtrength and force of a prevailing Army. And if ſuch Perſons ought not to be marked by ſome cenſure, or at leaſt not admitted to any ſacred Employments, till they have been ſenſible of their fault, and repent of it; I leave it to every body to conſider. But for the reſt of our Dividers, as long as the Biſhops have ſuch an Authority over their Prieſts, by what Title or conveyance ſoever they poſſeſs it, it is all one to them. And indeed the weaker their Title is, they will think they have the ſtronger Plea: So that this Notion were it ever ſo true, cannot go a great way towards the ſettling matters among us, but on the contrary will rather widen the breach.

I go next to examine his opinion in it ſelf: that there are many contradictions in his Diſcourſe, is apparent. For if Biſhops have *Authority to ordain, to exhort, to rebuke, to judge, and cenſure as they find cauſe*, and if this Authority *was given by the Apoſtles*. Is not here a diſtinct Order? all Eccleſiaſtical Functions are but ſo many Commiſſions from God, of which the conveyers were the Apoſtles, for what is the order of Prieſthood, but a Commiſſion from God, which was firſt iſſued out by the Apoſtles: giving ſuch Perſons authority to Preach, and to adminiſter Sacraments? and can any think that the Apoſtles could have given any ſuch Commiſſions, but

1. They muſt have had the direction of the Holy Ghoſt, that aſſiſted them in all they went about.

2. They muſt have conferred ſuch a meaſure of the Holy Ghoſt, as was neceſſary for the diſcharge of ſuch a Commiſſion, for they that conferred the Holy Ghoſt on all they laid their hands on, would have done it much more on thoſe they did commiſſionate for ſo high a truſt.

3. This muſt have been done by impoſition of hands, ſo we find they laid hands on *Paul* and *Barnabas*, when they were ſent to the *Gentiles*, though they were endued with extraordinary power before, and were *Apoſtles*, according to what St. *Paul* ſays of himſelf in the beginning of his Epiſtle to the *Galatians*. God had alſo by name marked them out for that ſervice, yet hands were laid on them, and ſo they were ſent out by the Holy Ghoſt. *Acts* 13 ver. 2, 3.

4. If

4. If these Persons commissionated with such Authority were empowered by the Apostles, then all the rest of the Priests were bound to submit to that Authority, and whatever power they might have pretended before that, then, since latter deeds do vacate and invalidate former ones, that power being conferred on another, who is acknowledged vested with the Authority, the former must be supposed divested of it, and bound to subject themselves to it. Nor could they, except in cases of simple necessity, re-assume it, without rejecting the Authority of the Apostles themselves: according to that maxime of our Saviour's, *He that rejecteth me, rejecteth him that sent me.*

5. Either the Apostles did declare this was only temporary, that for the present exigency, such extraordinary persons were vested with such Authority, or that this constitution should continue still in the Church. He cannot chuse the former, for then that order must have determined with these mens lives, in whose hands it was entrusted: which is against what that Authour pleads for. So that he must say they declared that such Commissions must continue to the end of the World, otherwise there were no obligation lying on the Church to continue them, which yet he acknowledges.

6. After the Apostles were dead, either these Commissions were to be renewed on the account of what the Apostles had appointed, or only by a voluntary delegation of the Priests and People; if the former, then our Bishops at this day act by vertue of a Commission from the Apostles. If the latter be true, then. 1. This delegation may be given, or not, as they please, and so the order may vanish. 2. They may limit or enlarge it as they please, and so may very much change it. 3. Those who are ordained Bishops without such Commissions, cannot be Bishops at all. For if that Power be only a Commission, then it cannot be seated in any person that has got no such Commission: therefore there being no such thing asked as a delegation of such Authority from the Priests (for the Election of the Dean and Chapter relates only to the Person, but not to the Power and Office,) none are now truly Bishops; since they have no such Commissions: nor does the Metropolitan, and the other consecrating Bishops, give any such Commissions, but only ordain a Bishop to the Work and Office so committed to him, by the imposition of their hands: in which it is clear, as also from the whole Office of the Consecration of Bishops, that they suppose there is a standing Power and Authority in the Office, and therefore do believe it does not depend upon any Commission they can give, all they do being to ordain him to the Office to which the Authority is necessarily annexed. So that it is clear, that either we have no Bishops at all, or the Commission

for

for this Authority is annexed to the Office, and the Church does not constitute the Office, but only admit or ordain a person duly elected and qualified unto an Office already constituted.

From all these particulars which necessarily follow upon that Authour's *Hypothesis*, I may well assume, that by his principles Bishops were empowered for ordination, and jurisdiction by the Apostles, they being directed in it by the Holy Ghost; and laying their hands on them, and conferring the Holy Ghost by such imposition of hands: upon which all the rest both Clergy and Laity were bound to submit to them: and that the Apostles intended this order should be still continued in the Church: So that all succeeding Bishops, act by that Power then conveyed by the Apostles to the first Bishops, and continued with their successors to the end of the World. And if this does not state the distinct Office of Bishops and Priests, let every Reader judge. There is a different power lodged with the Bishops, another Commission, ratified by an imposition of hands, which is to continue in a succession for ever.

So that, that *Hypothesis* destroys it self, establishing so many different things that contradict one another.

But before I go to answer his arguments, I shall premise somewhat of the Office of Bishop and Priest as it appeared in it's first Origination.

When Christ sent out his Apostles with an Universal jurisdiction as they gathered and planted Churches, there was a necessity to fix some to have the charge of them, and to labour in the conversion of others. Now the Apostles having observed, that Christ had in the institution of the Sacraments, and many other things, followed such customes as were received by the Jews: they must certainly have likewise followed the same Rule, for as the Gospel was first offered to the Jews, so they raising their new superstructure on the foundation of *Moses* and the Prophets, could not change the customs that were among the Jews, and instituted by *Moses*, further than was necessary for emancipating the Gentiles from that yoke. Therefore every Church of Christians coming in place of the Temple of *Jerusalem*, in which living Sacrifices were offered up to God, instead of the dead ones that were then antiquated: it was natural for them to take their Model from the Temple of *Jerusalem*, as the Synagogues had also done, in which there was one *High Priest*, *a company of Priests and Levites*, and this even St. *Jerome* who is in no small esteem with that Authour, in that Epistle to *Evagrius*, confirms to us in these words. *And that we may know the Apostolical Traditions were taken out of the old Testament: what* Aaron *and his Sons, and the Levites were in the Temple, that the*

Bishops,

*Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons are to claim to themselves in the Church* But where the number of the Christians was small, they made only one Bishop, who as his charge encreased might ordain others to assist him: This *Epiphanius* tells us he had from the *most ancient* or *profoundest* Histories, and in a matter of Fact to distrust History where it is strengthned with high probabilities from the nature of things is Unreasonable. There were two ranks of Christians, the one was the *Neophites* or *Novices*, who had lately received the Faith; the other were the first fruits of the Gospel who as they had at the first Preaching received the Faith, so had continued longer in it, and these naturally must have been called the *Seniors*, *Elders* or *Presbyters*.

There is one great errour that vulgar observers fall in, of which though all Criticks have often given notice, yet most people are still guilty of it, which is to judge of all words and appellations, according to the more received customes in or near their own time, not examining how they were used in former Ages, and till this caution be minded, we must fall into frequent mistakes every hour. So at first these names of *Bishop* and *Presbyter* were not used in that sence, they came afterwards to be appropriated to; any person that was of great and long standing in the Faith, would have esteemed it an honour to have been called a *Presbyter*, hence it is that there was not, that nice and choice distinction of the terms which use did afterwards bring in.

Upon which I shall with all modesty suggest to you one thing, which is not so much considered: that though those who were chosen to look after the Poor be called *Deacons* in the *6.* of the *Acts*, yet we find that term in the New Testament is not at all restricted to that sence, even after that appointment. St. *Paul* calls Christ a *Deacon*, *Rom.* 15. 8. He calls also the civil Powers the *Deacons*, or as we render it the *Ministers of God*, *Rom.* 13. 4. He calls all Church-men in general the *Deacons of Righteousness*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 15. He calls the Apostles *Deacons* frequently, 1 *Cor.* 3. 5. 2 *Cor.* 3. 6. and *6. cap.* 4. *v.* and *cap.* 11. *ver.* 23. and *Eph.* 3. 7. and *Col.* 1. 23, 25. He calls *Tychicus* a *Deacon*, *Eph.* 6. 21. and *Col.* 4. 7. He calls *Epaphras* a *Deacon*. So also *Timothy*, 1 *Thes.* 3. 2. So that we see this term is used in a great many other sences, than that of a distributer of Charity among the Widows. Therefore there is no reason to think that when St. *Paul* wrote to the *Philippians*, to the Bishops and Deacons, and when in his Epistle to *Timothy* he gives rules about Church-offices, passing immediately from the *Bishop* to the *Deacons*, that by *Deacons* we are only to understand the distributers of Charity, which was not an office of such importance, that they must have such extraordinary qualifications

ons: but that he is treating of some other standing Ministry in the Church, in which all Christians were more concerned; and therefore though the subsequent use of the Church appropriating the term *Deacon* to the other *Function*, these places in the Epistles of St. *Paul* were generally applyed to these *Deacons*, and the Translations of the New Testament as well the *vulgar Latin* as other modern ones into the vulgar Languages, rendring the *Greek* of *Deacon* by the term *Minister* in all the other places I have marked, This was less observed therefore there being so good ground to think that St. *Paul* in these Epistles is treating about Priests, whom he calls by a common name *Deacons* or *Ministers*; we have the disparity between these Offices clearly set down in the Scriptures.

Another thing is observable, that as long as the extraordinary effusion of the Holy Ghost continued, there could not be such a critical distinction of Functions, as came to be settled afterwards, when that ceased: for even the Laity were by these inspirations qualified to many things, which can be no Presidents, when that effusion of the Spirit is ceased. So though while that extraordinary assistance continued, there were not such clear traces of the several offices in the Church, yet if as soon as that began to fail, we find this distinction of orders appear clearly; We have reason to conclude it could be no other way settled but as the Apostles had at first appointed: Though while every one was so full of the Holy Ghost all these limits were not observed, for any extraordinary emission of the Holy Ghost being above positive and constant rules, it is not to be wondred if we have no such clear account of a formed and regulated society, at the first planting of Churches in all Offices and Functions. And yet we see the New Testament full of evidences that Christ and his Apostles intended there should be an eminence of Power, committed to some Pastors beyond others. So Christ gave that Universal Authority over all, to his twelve Apostles, so the Apostles had some Assistants, whom though they employed on other Commissions, yet their chief residence and work was in some particular Churches, over which they were set. And to such the Apostles write, as to persons that had the charge and were accountable for these Churches. And the reason of this was, that since there could not be found such numbers of men sufficiently fitted for the work of the Gospel, especially in those trying times; Therefore it was to be depositated in a few hands, who were of more approved sufficiency and worth, the rest being to be directed and subject to them. This did very much compense the defects of other Church-men, who though not so well qualified to go vern, yet being willing to obey, and able to follow Directions, they might

by that means become very useful in the Gospel.

Now there are two things that must be annexed to that superiour inspection without which we cannot imagine that it could be managed or have force: the one is, that all to be ordained should receive their orders from such Bishops: Otherwise obedience could not be expected from them, nor could the superiour be any way accountable for them, if he did not convey their Authority to them. It was also necessary that in all matters of indifference the superiour Governour, or Bishop, must be looked on as having Authority to rule and command, and so the inferiour judge himself bound to obey. And indeed if in those days of persecution, when the Church had no assistance, but all possible opposition from the civil powers, there had not been very positive rules of obedience and order, left by the Apostles, it had not been possible for them to have been kept in any order, or under any Government. But the rules of superiority and subjection were without doubt formally left by the Apostles. Thence it was that the whole Precinct of a Bishop's charge was called his *Parish*: in which he had the care of Souls, and for his assistance did chuse out and ordain some of the more eminent and ancient Christians, to assist him in teaching the flock, and administring Sacraments, who were in all things directed by him; and upon his death one of these was presented by the Election of the Clergy and people to the superiour Bishop of the Province, who did ordain him. Now though the writings of the first Ages are for the greater part lost, yet there are abundant evidences to shew this Authority was set up by the Apostles. I need not take pains to prove it against this Authour, for he acknowledges it. But because some may perhaps read this Letter, that have not studied this point in the larger and more learned works of the Asserters of this order, I shall say as much on this subject as I think may very justly and reasonably satisfie any Man, and shall wave St. *Ignatius his Epistles*, though the Authority of those is made good with the astonishing labours of the Incomparably Learned *Bishop of Chester*.

But being to give a short hint of the uncontested authorities that may be brought to prove this, I shall begin with *Irenæus* to whom we may very well give credit in a matter of Fact, he knew St. *Polycarp* and was instructed by him, and he tells us that *He was constituted by the Apostles Bishop in the Church of Smyrna.* So that we find from him that St. *Polycarp* was ordained by the Apostles Bishop of the Church of *Smyrna*. Now that great Saint and Martyr, must have taken his Notion of a Bishop from no other original, but that which he saw in his first Instructor: and yet we clearly see, he judged the

*Iren. lib 3. cap. 3. Et apud Euseb. lib 4. cap. 13*

the Bishop was more than the *Presidens*, for he reckoning the Tradition of the Faith, counts it by the Bishops that had been in *Rome* from the Apostles days: from whence it appears he considered them as the chief depositaries of the Faith. And in his Epistle to *Victor* Bishop of *Rome*, wherein he condemned his severity in excommunicating the Eastern Bishops for observing *Easter* on the 14. day of the Moon, he lays the whole blame of it upon *Victor*, though *Damasus* tells us it was done *upon a Consultation Victor held about it with his Presbyters and Deacons.* Now the blame was not to be laid on *Victor*, if it had not been the received practice of the Church at that time, for the Bishops to have the jurisdiction chiefly in their hands. So that we clearly see what *Irenæus* understood a Bishop to be, and if that had not been consonant to what he knew in St. *Polycarp* who had instructed him, we cannot in reason imagine he would have consented to such a tyrannical excess of power.

*Lib. 3. adverſ. Hæret. cap. 3.*

*Apud Euſeb. Lib. 5. cap. 24.*

*Tertullian* [a] reckons the Origine of the Bishop's power *from the Apostles, from whom they derived their succession.* The same Writer also tells us, [*] that *neither Priests nor Deacons had right to baptize, but upon a power from the Bishop.* He also says [†] *they received the Sacrament from no hands but their Presidents* (or Bishops) *Firmilian* that was St. *Cyprian's* contemporary tells us [*] *the Bishops* (whom he there calls *Majores natu*, and from the other parts of that Epistle it is plain he means *Bishops*) *did preside in the Church, and had the power of Baptizing, Confirming and ordaining*, and even [*] *Jerome* himself tells us, that *neither Priest nor Deacon had a right to Baptize without the Bishop's command.* And St. *Denis* of *Alexandria*, who was undisputed one of the greatest Persons in his Age, in his Letter to *Fabius* Bishop of *Rome* tells him, that upon the difficulty was raised, how to deal with those that died, before they had compleated their penitence, *He had given a command that the peace of the Church should be given them.* Where it is clear the Authority of commanding and not only presiding rested with the Bishop.

[a] *De præſc. cap. 32. Cont. Marcion Lib. 4. cap. 5.*

[*] *De Bapt.*

[†] *De Cor. Milit.*

[*] *Epiſt. 75. inter Epiſt. Cypr.*

[*] *Cont. Luciſer.*

*Apud Euſeb. Lib. 6. cap. 44.*

And in fine, when the Christian Church came out of the fire of persecution, she decreed in the Council of Nice, that the *ancient Customes should be in force*, concerning the power of *Metropolitans* and *Patriarchs*, we must

*Can. 6.*

acknowledge there were many very ancient men in that Council, ſo that they, who were within 200. years of the Apoſtolick time, and among whom we may reckon many that were 80. years of Age, or near it, could not eſteem any thing *Ancient*, that had not been derived from the Apoſtolical inſtitution. I ſhall not inſiſt on any thing that was decreed afterwards, where we may ſuſpect power, and cunning, might have gone a great way to have caſt the Church into ſuch a mould, as might beſt agree with the conſtitutions of the Empire. There might be alſo other Political reaſons, to have made the Biſhops after that time aſpire to Power and Precedence. But I have only vouched the Writers of the former Ages, witneſſes in a matter of Fact, wherein we have no juſt cauſe to ſuſpect them, to depoſe to us what was the ſucceſſive Government of the Church from the Apoſtles days.

Upon all which I deſire, that you and every honeſt man will in your Conſciences conſider a few particulars.

1. Whatever we find generally received in thoſe Ages about a thing that was viſible, and in which none could miſtake, we may ſafely think it came from the Apoſtles days. We may indeed imagine that when ſome of the Apoſtles, to gain upon the Jews did obſerve the Chriſtian *Eaſter* on the 14. day of the Moon, others might have miſtaken this compliance, as if the Apoſtles had judged that the 14. was the right day: We may alſo reaſonably enough think, that when they heard St. *John* mention the thouſand years, that were repreſented to him in his Viſions, they might have thought that had a literal meaning. But in a matter of Government, we cannot fancy how ſuch miſtakes could have been taken up.

2. In things that were external and related to Government, there were many concerned, and ſo an innovation could not be eaſily brought about. The people all looked on, and were obliged to know, to whom they owed obedience in things ſacred: the Clergy we may reaſonably think were not ſo meek, as to have ſubmitted to any unwarranted Authority over them. And if they had known they were equal to their Biſhops in order, we cannot think but either out of a juſt zeal for aſſerting their freedom, or out of an indignation at the miſcarriages and inſolence of ſome Biſhops, or out of an unwillingneſs to ſubmit and obey, which is natural to moſt people, they had aſſerted their equality.

3. Where different Churches among whom we ſee no commerce, eſpecially in the times of perſecution, do agree in any conſtitution, we muſt ſuppoſe that came to them, from ſome perſons, from whom they received common inſtruction. This is an argument thought very

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convincing againſt *Atheiſts*, when we ſhow many things wherein all mankind agree, which we cannot imagine how it ſhould have been brought about, if they had not common Parents, who had derived theſe things to all their Poſterity. So how can it be imagined that from the Churches of *Armenia* and *Perſia* in the *Eaſt*, to thoſe of *Spain* in the *Weſt*, from the *African* Churches in the *South*, to our *Britiſh* Churches in the *North*, that had little or no correſpondence together, this conſtitution of the Church ſhould have been Univerſally received and ſubmitted to. This was when no *General Council* could meet to appoint it, and there was no *Secular Prince* to ſet it forward, upon any Political account. Now it cannot be imagined, how this could have been brought about, if their common Spiritual Fathers the *Apoſtles* had not agreed upon it: when they firſt ſcattered to go over the World. For we have no reaſon to think they did ever meet all together again.

4. No Men do an ill thing, or deſire a change but upon ſome advantage, or at leaſt the Proſpect and Hope of it. And if the worſt of men, are to be meaſured by this (I except *Hellers* in vice) what muſt we judge of thoſe, whom we ought juſtly to pronounce the beſt of Men. Their being Biſhops expoſed them to the ſharpeſt fury of their Perſecutors, they were but poor and mean, excepting the Biſhops of the great Cities, they commonly were begun with, in every new ſtorm that was raiſed againſt the Church; their labours were great, for the care of the flock lay on them: and they were unwearied in the diſcharge of their Paſtoral care. Can we think any Man would be fond of ſuch a ſtation, to that degree as to violate the inſtitution of Chriſt, to arrive at it. But with what face can any man ſuſpect thoſe Ages, of ſuch foul dealing upon whom the impreſſions of the lowlineſs of their *Great Maſter* were ſo deep, and who were daily looking for a Croſs, and ſome cruel death: with what aſſurance could they have prepared for ſuch trials, if out of pride and ambition they had been invading the rights of the other Churches, and aſpiring to an unjuſt domination over their Brethren.

5. Suppoſe we could be prevailed on, to think the whole Church was ſo abandoned, the Biſhops to their pride, and the Prieſts to an heedleſs ſimplicity, yet how can we reaſonably think none of her enemies were ſo ſharp-ſighted, as to diſcern and object this to them? they had malice enough, and if the *Orders* of *Biſhop* and *Preſbyter* were one at firſt, but afterwards the Epiſcopal ambition had ſubdued the Prieſts under them; ſome memory of it had been certainly preſerved, otherwiſe how ſhould St. *Jerome* and the pretended *Ambroſe* be ſuppoſed to have heard of it. But if any ſuch thing had been known,,

known, is it possible to imagine that among all the *Hereticks* and *Schismaticks* that were in those Ages, none should have charged it on the Church, but on the contrary all of them had Bishops of their own? and in the end when one arose that did condemn the order, he had very few to follow him: nor did his own party the *Arians*, receive this at his hands. Therefore we have all reason to conclude that there was no such change made after the Apostles days, for St. *Jerome* himself acknowledges, *the Apostles set this order up*, though he seems to insinuate, it was not in the beginning of their planting the Church. And it is very clear that *Pseudo Ambrose* gives us his own imaginations for Canonical Histories.

So from all these things put together, I dare appeal to any man to say upon his Conscience, if he is not perswaded the Episcopal Authority over the flock and the Clergy, is clearly derived from the Apostles. All this I have said more fully than perhaps seemed at first view needful, but when I consider that though this Authour does confess the Episcopal Function to be of Apostolical institution; yet over his whole Discourse there are many things said, that do very much detract from that very acknowledgement, which the force and evidence of truth drew from him in the beginning of that Chapter; So that some suspect these words were only set down, that upon such an introduction he might seem a friend, and so wound both more securely, and more mortally; since also many who read and magnifie that discourse, do with open mouth declame against this order, I hope none will judge it impertinent, if I have taken some pains to lay such things before them, as may give new and fresh impressions of the Divine and Apostolical Origine of this holy Office. All that remains yet to be considered is, what answers to make to the Objections that Authour lays in our way.

His first objection is, from the silence of the Scriptures, to which, the answer will be easily gathered from what has been said, for if what I do suggest about the sence of Deacons in St. *Paul's* Epistles be true, then the case is most clear; but besides that, there are manifest hints of a disparity, or superiority in Scripture, and these are expounded by so authentical and clear a Tradition, that we are not more sure of the *Change of the Jewish Sabbath into the Christian Lords day*, or of *the Baptism of Infants*, or of the *Canon of the Scripture* than we are of this Apostolical institution. It was necessary that all super-natural revealed truths, should have been clearly and fully expressed in Scripture, and none of these left to the mistakes and misrepresentation of every Age, but for matters of Government it was enough, if general rules were given,

given, which the platform of the Churches then gathered did ſo explain, that we have no reaſon to have ſcruples about it, though a full and formal account of it be not left us.

The ſecond objection is, becauſe he finds the Apoſtles gave but one ordination, which he cannot conceive, how it could confer two diſtinct orders or Characters. This is founded on a great miſtake, for pray cannot the ſame great Seal, that affixed to one Writing, does only confer the honour of *Barronage*, when affixed to another Writing, confer the dignities of *Duke*, *Marqueſs*, *Earl*, *Viſcount*, and *Baron*? So it is plain the Apoſtles when they were to ſend out any with a ſacred commiſſion, by the ſame outward rite, they might have conferred whatever authority they intended to confer. For they declaring on what errant, and with what power they ſent out a perſon, and impoſing hands upon him, that impoſition confirmed the miſſion and authority committed to ſuch perſons. So there was no need of their ordaining Church men through ſeveral degrees, but as they ſaw men qualified, they did ordain them, and I do not queſtion but with the ſame impoſition of hands, and the ſame prayers and words, they might have ordained two perſons at once, the one a *Biſhop*, the other a *Prieſt*. For we are not to conſider in an ordination the outward rite and prayers only, but the preceding declaration made, and the publick intention of thoſe that ordain. It is true, we find by the ancienteſt Ordinals we have, that there were ſome differences uſed in the conſecration of Biſhops that were not uſed when a Prieſt was ordained, which may be reaſonably judged were very ancient, *they held the Book of the Goſpels over his head and ſhoulders, and all the Biſhops laid their hands on him, one pouring out the bleſſing.* And *Denis* the *Areopagite*, tells us, that beſides the impoſition of hands, and laying the Book of the Goſpels on his head, and the prayer, *He was marked by the Sign of the Croſs, and ſaluted by the Biſhop and all the holy order.* And in the ordination of a Prieſt, *the Biſhop and the Prieſts with him only laid their hands on his head, and bleſſed him.*

*Can. 2. Can. Carth. 4. de Eccleſ. Hier. cap 5.*

*Can 3. Carth. and Dion. ibid.*

By which ſimplicity of their forms we may on the way obſerve, how unlike the Primitive Church was to the *Roman* Church: that abounds in ſo many ſuperſtitious ſopperies, with which their *Pontifical* is full. There was alſo proviſion made, that none ſhould be made a Biſhop, till he had paſſed thorough inferiour degrees, not from any ſuch ſubtleties as School-men have ſince deviſed: but that none might arrive at the higheſt order of the Church, till he gave a ſufficient

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trial of his faith and manners, by his deportment in all the inferiour ſteps in which they intended he ſhould ſtay ſo long, that all might be well ſatisfied about him. And in or a little before St. *Cyprian*'s time they appointed ſome inferiour ſteps, which were not ſacred orders, nor pretended to be Apoſtolical, but degrees of probation through which thoſe who intended to ſerve the Church, ſhould paſs, before they were made Deacons. And this furniſhes me with a very conſiderable remark, to ſhew the fidelity of thoſe Ages in the accounts they give us of Apoſtolical inſtitutions: for they do every where tell us, there were but three ſacred orders, *Deacon*, *Prieſt*, and *Biſhop*, and no where ſtudy to make us believe theſe other degrees of *Porters*, *Readers*, *Acolyths*, *Exorciſts* and *Sub-Deacons* were Apoſtolical: Now if the Epiſcopal ſuperiority and power was a device of that Age, or of the former, why ſhould they not have called all *Apoſtolical*, as well as ſome parts of it. But it is plain they were careful and conſcientious in delivering punctually to us, what was *Apoſtolical*, and what only *Eccleſiaſtical*.

His third objection is, becauſe the Apoſtles call themſelves ſometimes *Presbyters*, and no where Biſhops; this ſure if it prove any thing muſt prove more than that Writer intends, even that *Presbyters* are above Biſhops. He ſhould alſo have conſidered that the Apoſtles do call themſelves much oftner *Deacons* than *Presbyters*. So if this argument be of force, then the Deacons muſt be likewiſe of the ſame order with the Biſhops. But the true account of this is, that the name *Presbyter* was uſed for any ancient perſon of Authority, and among the Chriſtians it ſignified a Chriſtian of a long ſtanding. So upon both theſe accounts, the Apoſtles being then both ancient men, and of great authority, and thoſe that were the firſt fruits of the World unto Chriſt, might well be called *Presbyters*, though not in that ſence by which the following ages underſtood that term. For I do not queſtion but the names of Biſhops and Prieſts, were at firſt promiſcuouſly uſed and continued ſo even to *Ireneus* his time, who in his Letter to *Victor* calls the Biſhops of *Rome*, that were before him *Presbyters*, but afterwards thoſe two terms were appropriated to that ſence we now underſtand them in. Or if you will ſtand upon the Apoſtles being called *Presbyters*, to prove an equality, or ſuperiority of *Presbyter* over the Biſhop; Let me deſire you to obſerve, that St. *Peter*, who calls himſelf an *Elder*, yet puts us in mind that *Biſhops* are above *Presbyters*, for he tells us in that ſame Epiſtle that Chriſt was the *Biſhop of our Souls*, and in that ſubordination I acknowledge the Apoſtles were but *Prieſts*, which perhaps gave occaſion to *Ignatius* to reſemble

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the Bishop and *Presbyters* to *Christ and his Apostles*. Besides it is as unreasonable to build any opinion concerning these orders, upon such humble expressions of the Apostles, as if because a *Prince* or a *General* will ordinarily call his *Souldiers*, *fellow Souldiers*, that therefore they and he are of the same order.

The fourth objection is, because St. *Clement* in his Epistle to the *Corinthians* speaks only of *Bishops* and *Deacons*. It is true in one place he does say, that *the Apostles did ordain the first fruits of their labours, having first tryed them in the Spirit, to be Bishops and Deacons*. But if what was before observed about the use of the Term *Deacon*, be well grounded, then St. *Clement*'s words may be also very justly understood of *Bishops* and *Priests*, but because this has the prejudice of novelty against it, let us look further into that Epistle, and we shall find it no less clear by other expressions, that there were different orders in the Church, though in that place he comprehends them under that common name, for he commends them *because they were subject to their Governours, and gave all decent honour to their Presbyters*, and again says, *Let us reverence our Governours, and honour our Presbyters*, and clearly applies the subordination that was in the Temple of *Jerusalem*, of *High-Priest*, *Priest*, *Levite*, and *Lay-man* to the Ecclesiastical constitution, as will appear to any that will consider that Epistle.

From which I conclude, that though St. *Clement* did comprehend *Bishops* and *Priests* under the common name of *Bishop*, yet he shews us evidently, there were *Governours* in the Church that were superiour to the *Presbyters*, and to whom there were higher degrees of honour due: and *particular Ministrations proper*, as were to the *High-Priest*.

The fifth objection is, that *Justin Martyr* calls the Bishops only *Presidents*. This is of no force, for that *Father* had no occasion given him to reckon up the several Functions in the Church when he was writing an *Apology* for the Christians to the *Roman Senate*, in which he gives a plain and simple account of their Faith and Worship, but it had been to very little purpose for him, to have told the *Roman Senate*, what were the several *Orders* of *Church-Officers* among them. And it is not improbable that both he and *Tertullian* might have used the Term *President*, the rather because it would be the more easily understood by the *Romans* than either *Bishop* or *Priest*.

The ſixth objection is, from St. *Cyprian*, who calls himſelf *Prepoſitus* or Preſident. But neither does this ſignifie much, for we are to conſider the ſence of Authours, not ſo much by ſome terms or words they uſe, as by the formal accounts they give us, when they come to treat expreſly on any ſubject. Therefore when we would examine that Father's opinion in this matter, we are neither to conſider what in modeſty he writes to his Flock or Clergy, nor what terms he makes uſe of, but the ſure way is to ſee what his ſenſe of the Epiſcopal Authority was, when he formally treated of it upon it's being queſtioned and to this we have reaſon to appeal. St. *Cyprian*'s

*Epiſt. 65.* Counſel was asked by *Rogatian* another Biſhop concerning the cenſure of a *Deacon*, who had carried himſelf inſolently toward him, to whom St. *Cyprian* writes, *that by the vigor of his Epiſcopat and the Authority of his Chair he had juſt power to have avenged that inſolence inſtantly.* And toward the end he ſays, *theſe are the beginnings of Hereticks, and the riſe and attempts of ill meaning Schiſmaticks, that they may pleaſe themſelves, and deſpiſe their Biſhop, with a ſwelling pride. So men ſeparate from the Church ſo a prophane Altar is ſet up without, and ſo men rebel againſt the Peace, of Chriſt and the divine Ordinance and Unity.* Theſe words St. *Cyprian* writes like one that propheſied of the age we are born in, and if he does not aſſert the Power of Jurisdiction to the height I leave to every ones eyes.

*Epiſt. 10.* And the ſame Saint in another Epiſtle, challenging the inſolent preſumption of ſome Prieſts, hath theſe words. *There is no danger which we ought not now to fear, our Lord being thus offended, when ſome of the Prieſts, who neither are mindful of the Goſpel, of their place, or of the judgement to come, and conſider not that there is a Biſhop ſet over them, do aſſume all to themſelves, to the reproach and contempt of him that is ſet over them, which was never at all done by any that went before us.*

*Epiſt. 27.* And another of his Epiſtles which is about the ſame ſubject, concerning the Lapſed that had fallen in the perſecution begins with theſe words. *Our Lord whoſe commands we ought to fear and obſerve when he was ſettling the Biſhop's honour* (or authority) *and the rule of his Church ſays to* Peter: I ſay, thou art *Peter*, and upon this Rock will I build my Church, &c. *From thence through the Revolution of times and ſucceſſions, the Ordination of Biſhops and the account of the Church hath run down, that the Church ſhould be conſtituted upon Biſhops, and every Act of the Church ſhould be*

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*governed by these Presidents* (or *Prepositi* as that Authour would have them called, though he seems not to have considered that by this Saint they were not bare *Overseers*, but had the whole power lodged with them.) *Since then this is founded by the Divine Law, I wonder at the bold rashness of some that wrote to me as they did, since the Church is made up of the Bishops, the Clergy, and all that stand* (i. e. in the *Faith*, or *stand in the Worship*) And if in all these places, St. *Cyprian* that lived within 140. years of the Apostles does not very formally assure us, that both the full Authority was in the Bishop and that this was settled by Christ, so that there remains no room for any shift or answer I appeal to you and every unprejudiced Reader.

But there is yet a clearer and less suspected testimony in St. *Cyprian*'s works, in an Epistle which the *Clergy of Rome* wrote to him, when their See was vacant after *Fabian*'s death, from which we may judge, what sense the Priests of that age had of the Episcopal Office: These are their words, *after the death of Fabian of most noble memory, There is no Bishop yet constituted among us, by reason of the difficulty of affairs and the times, who should regulate all these things, and must consider the case of the Lapsed with authority and advice*: Can any thing be more evident, than at that time which was but 150. years after the Apostles were dead, it was acknowledged by the *Priests* that they had no full Authority to *govern the Church* when they wanted a *Bishop*. Now if the difference between *Bishop* and *Priest*, be only by Commission, they being both the same *Order*, then certainly in a vacancy the Priests have a full power. But here we see the greatest company of Priests then in the Christian world, did not think they were of the same *Order*, or had the *Authority of a Bishop*, even in a *sede vacante*. *Fp.* 31.

The seventh objection is, That *Presbyters* are ordained in the same form, in which Christ ordained his Apostles, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins ye forgive, they are forgiven them.* This must either prove nothing to the purpose, or too much, for if there be any strength in this consequence, it must amount to this, That all *Presbyters* are of the same order the Apostles were of, which certainly that Authour will think is too much. The answer to it is given by St. *Paul*, that *there are diversities of operations, administrations, and gifts, but it is the same God, the same Lord, and the same Spirit, for all these worketh that one and the self same Spirit.* And since it is both by the authority and assistance of the Holy Ghost, that all these offices are derived and discharged, it is no argument to prove the Offices are the same, 1 *Cor.* 12. v. 4. 5. &c.

because we pray that all may *receive the Holy Ghost*, it being necessarily to be understood, that every one receives it in his own order. Nor do the following words of *forgiving of sins*, prove any more, but that both these offices are empowered to that equally. For it is acknowledged that a Priest gives absolution as well as a Bishop: but from their being both authorized equally in one thing, it is somewhat a strange kind of inference, to conclude, there is nothing else which a Bishop has authority to do, that is not competent to a Priest.

The last objection is, from the inconvenience that must needs follow on our asserting Bishops and Priests to be of different orders, since this must condemn and un-church all the foreign Churches; which were indeed a very severe and uncharitable censure. I know this is very popular and taking, Therefore I shall study so to clear it, that I hope no scruple shall remain about it.

These are some conditions that are simply necessary to Salvation, without which, no man shall see the face of God, and these do indispensibly oblige all without exception. There be other positive precepts which are of obligation to all who possibly can obey them, so that the contempt or voluntary want of these is a high provocation, they being both means of Grace, and symbols of Christian fellowship instituted by Christ, and to continue for ever in his Church. Yet few are so severe as to deny a possibility of salvation without these. I know St. *Austin* was of this severe side, but in that he is generally censured, as having exceeded; it is an hard Doctrine to condemn all Infants that die without Baptism, at least to exclude them from the Kingdom of Heaven, as St. *Austin* did. For if the Child die in the belly or birth, it is not conceivable that it should be punished for the want of that which God himself made impossible. And the Primitive Church did generally believe, that such as being converted to the Faith, did suffer Martyrdom, even though they were not baptized, were certainly saved. In like manner if in some Northern and poor Countries, where Wine can scarce be had, and goes at excessive rates, if persons be so poor, that they cannot get Wine, and so either die without the other Sacrament, or offer some other liquour in the Chalice, it were a strange degree of hardness to deny salvation to the people of such a Clime. So also the Offices of the Church are necessary by a divine appointment, even in the principles of most of the *Non conformists*, and yet neither this *Authour* nor they will deny but even a Laick if cast upon an Island, where he upon learning their Language came to instruct them in the Christian Faith, and could have

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no commerce with any Church; under ſuch a neceſſity he might perform all divine Functions, for all Chriſtians are a *Royal Prieſthood*, and abſolute neceſſity ſuperſedes all the rules of order, decency and Government.

And the *Presbyterians* who acknowledge as great difference between a *Presbyter* and a Laick, as we plead is between a Biſhop and Prieſt, yet acknowlegde theſe to be true Churches, which began upon no orders at all, where ſome perſons that underſtood the Scriptures, did gather Churches, and adminiſter the Sacraments; and they can ſay nothing for juſtifying ſuch Churches, which is not applicable to us in this caſe.

Therefore when the *Weſtern Churches* were ſo corrupted that none could any longer with a good Conſcience receive orders in them, or ſubmit to the terms upon which only their Communion could be had; If any Prieſts ſeeing theſe errours, did inſtruct the people in the truth, and finding no other way poſſible to propagate or preſerve that purity of Doctrine, did ordain other Prieſts, though this was irregular and defective yet we are not ſo uncharitable as to judge people under theſe circumſtances, but acknowledge that abſolute neceſſity ſuperſedes all poſitive precepts. I know ſome have been ſevere on this head, becauſe they judge they are under no abſolute neceſſity. But that is a great miſtake, thoſe that live under a Prince of a different Religion, as the *Proteſtants* in *France* do, could not with any ſecurity come over hither to receive orders. For can it be imagined that Princes who are always jealous of their Authority, and chiefly of ſuch of their Subjects, as differ from them in Religion, would ſuffer them to come and be ordained in another Prince's Dominions: they would certainly uſe that as a pretence to juſtifie their ſeverities againſt them. Nor would they permit them to come under ſuch a ſtrength and compacted unity, as this conſtitution of the Church would bring them to. Therefore theſe are to be pitied, helped, and prayed for, and not inſulted over. And for thoſe other Churches, that are under Princes or a Government of the ſame Religion, they are in no leſs captivity to their ſuperiours, who will never ſuffer them to go to another Church for orders: and they would think it a thing inconſiſtent with the peace of their States, to let any Eccleſiaſticks get into ſo calumniating a power, where the conſtitution of their policy is Democratical. It is to be regrated that at firſt their Biſhops were ſtubborn, and would not receive the Reformation, which the chief of the Reformers did very much lament. Nor is it to be wondred, if theſe Churches being thus formed under theſe neceſſities, and not according to the ancient and Apoſtolical conſtitution in their ordinations, have

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since that time studied to justifie themselves upon other accounts, than bare necessity,

In that we think them in an errour, but it being no fundamental one, and the necessity that at first forced that disorder, lying still over them, we dare not be so severe, as to deny them to be true Churches. Though we hold there is still such defects among them, that they are not compleat and perfect in all their constitutions. But after all this Charity to those under such hardships, we have great cause to conclude much more severely against those, who being born in a Church that had no such defect in it's first Reformation, but was exactly moulded after the primitive pattern, and continued in so flourishing an estate that it was the just glory of the Reformed Churches, and the chief object of the envy and hatred of the *Roman*, was at first separated from, and then subverted by some hot-headed Schismaticks. Therefore the disparity being so great between our dissenters, who are such out of *Choice*, and in opposition to all Laws both of Church and State, and the foreign Churches who are irregular out of necessity, our judging tenderly and favourably of the one, does no way oblige us to relax and forego these excellent primitive constitutions, on the account of the others among our selves.

And thus far I think I have given you a satisfactory account of all that this Authour says on this head. You know me and my circumstances better, than to suspect, either interest, design, or obligation, has engaged me to these perswasions, since by all these I am rather byassed another way. I have written nothing but that about which I am so well assured, that I know I am able to make good every particular I have set down. And therefore though I do not allow you, to let my name go with this Paper, if you make a more publick use of it; It is not that I fear either the censures of engaged and partial Zealots, or the replies of a contentious Disputant, so he abstain from railing and fooling, in neither of which, my Genius, which was born for severer exercises, will permit me to engage.

But now to wind up all after so tedious a Letter, I must conclude with my first regrates, that we are brought to such a pass, that discourses of this kind find such acceptance among us. The Patient is in a high distemper, when he loaths wholesome food; and longs after every fantastical *quelque chose* he hears of: So it is indeed to be lamented, that the best compositures that do either inform or edifie the Reader are neglected, and if any thing gets vent, that tends to make the most sacred things grow cheap, and fall in contempt, it is bought up at any rate, and read with an insatiable itch. I wish the Authour of that discourse may with serious and deep reflections, consider what

what he has done in this work of his: he has made all the enemies of Peace triumph, and has put ſome popular things in the mouths of his Readers, with which they think themſelves ſufficiently armed to baffle both the Articles and Rules of our Church. I am confident he is ſo ſerious and ſo ſincere a man, that when ever he is made ſenſible of this, he will be very ready to take out of the way any ſcandal which theſe his conceptions have brought forth.

In fine, I pray God teach us to know the things that belong to our Peace, that ſo our animoſities and heart-burnings being laid aſide we may all ſtudy to ſeek *the things that belong to Peace, and the things whereby we may edifie one another.* If I have wearied out your patience with a long Epiſtle, I was forced to it, by the ſubject you commanded me to write about. And yet I have done it as ſhort as was poſſible: which has made me overlook many leſſer errours in that diſcourſe, which were not of ſuch general concern, but diſcover how eaſily that Writer takes many things upon truſt. It was needleſs to amuſe the World with theſe particulars, and I am more a *Friend* and *Honourer* of that *Author*, than to engage with him meerly out of humour, to contend with him, or to expoſe him, leaſt of all to make a needleſs ſhow of reading. But I will make an end.

*London*, *May* the 23.
1676.

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# *FINIS.*